

the delivery destination in a region of said map on the basis of address information input by said customer;

displaying said searched map on said home page or said virtual store;

determining a specific dealer selected by said customer as a delivery destination of said merchandise, based on the displayed map, said specific dealer representing a place of customer's merchandise reception;

determining and preparing a delivery schedule on the basis of a condition of a contract with reference to delivery schedule models predetermined in consideration of delivery schedules determined on the basis of past data when said contract is made with respect to said merchandise; and

performing schedule management periodically by using electronic mail while monitoring whether inspection information exists in a specified period when said dealer exists.

REMARKS

Initially, in the Office Action dated June 11, 2002, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,324,522 (Peterson et al.). Further, claims 5-9 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Peterson et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,055,536 (Shimakawa et al.).

By the present response, Applicants have amended the specification to further clarify the invention. Moreover, Applicants have amended claims 1-9 to further clarify the invention. Applicants have also amended Figs. 5-10. Claims 1-9 remain pending in the present application.

35 USC §102 Rejection

Claims 1-4 have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Peterson et al. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Peterson et al. discloses a process for integrating a maintenance supply network within an information network for selectively distributing information about inventory levels and pricing among vendors, and efficiently transferring inventory between parties according to prearranged terms.

Applicants submit that Peterson et al. does not disclose or suggest the limitations in the combination of each of claims 1-4 of the present application of, inter alia, providing map information indicating candidates of available merchandise relay station as the accepted delivery destination to a user terminal, or a choice of a dealer of a neighborhood capable of mediating delivery as a delivery destination of ordered merchandise. According to the claims of the present invention, virtual stores on a network can accept a user's or customer's order for merchandise and provide map information concerning a delivery destination to a user's terminal where the delivery destination represents a place at which the user can receive the ordered merchandise as a merchandise relay station. Therefore, a user or customer can request delivery of merchandise to a dealer as a relay station, such as a convenient store. Thus, the user can receive the ordered merchandise at her or his convenient time in a place of delivery of the merchandise close to the home of the user.

In contrast, Peterson et al. discloses the delivery destination being a user's address or an address of a users terminal. This is not an accepted delivery destination being a merchandise relay station or choosing a dealer of a neighborhood capable of mediating delivery as a delivery destination of ordered

merchandise as recited in the claims of the present application. The Examiner asserts that Peterson et al. discloses providing a selection of information containing a choice of a dealer neighborhood capable of mediating delivery on the basis of a preset address of the user terminal as a delivery destination at cols. 8 and 9. However, this section of Peterson et al. discloses providing a delivery destination being a user's address or an address of user's terminal. As noted previously, this is not a place at which a user can receive merchandise as a merchandise relay station as recited in the claims of the present application.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Peterson et al. does not disclose or suggest the limitations in the combination of each of claims 1-4 of the present application. Applicants respectfully request that these rejections be withdrawn and that these claims be allowed.

35 USC §103 Rejections

Claims 5-9 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Peterson et al. in view of Shimakawa et al. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Shimakawa et al. discloses an information processing system that stores information of various types which is obtained in the real world, in connection with keys indicative of the attribute and feature of the information so that the real world information is stored quickly and surely in the virtual world which is formed of the linkage of information and stored information of various types is retrieved easily.

Applicants submit that neither Peterson et al. nor Shimakawa et al., taken alone or in any proper combination, disclose, suggest or render obvious the limitations in the combination of each of claims 5-9 of the present application of,

inter alia, selecting a dealer by a customer where the dealer represents a place of customers merchandise reception. As noted previously, Peterson et al. does not relate to or disclose at all a dealer representing a place where a customer can receive merchandise. Shimakawa et al. further does not disclose or suggest this limitation in the claims of the present application.


Accordingly, Applicants submit that neither Peterson et al. nor Shimakawa et al., taken alone or in any proper combination, disclose, suggest or render obvious the limitations in the combination of each of claims 5-9 of the present application. Applicants respectfully request that these rejections be withdrawn and that these claims be allowed.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-9 are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of such claims is respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned **"Version with markings to show changes made."**

To the extent necessary, Applicant petitions for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees and excess claim fees, to Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (referencing case No. 500.38711X00) and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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Version with markings to show changes made

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 20, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--First, the client makes access to the home page on Internet, watches merchandise information introduced by the home page and orders the merchandise of the sales merchant [(step 501)]. When the client orders the merchandise, the client confirms the stock of the merchandise, the time for delivery, the merchandise code, the number or quantity of merchandise, the amount of money, the telephone number, and so on [(step 503)]. Then, the client inputs data of the client, that is, buyer name, address and ID [(step 505)]. In the case of a membership system, only membership number may be used as the data of the client. These operations can be made on a very general operating screen. The description of the operating screen will be omitted here.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 21, line 11, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Then, the screen on the home page goes to a screen concerning reception of merchandise [(step 507)]. For example, in this embodiment, a screen for selection of the way of receiving merchandise as shown in Fig. 6 is displayed. In this example, (1) convenience store, (2) home and (3) others are displayed as the place where the merchandise will be received. Then, the screen goes to a screen concerning the way of paying the charge [(step 509)]. For example, as shown in Fig. 7, (1) convenience store, (2) home and (3) card are displayed as the way of paying

the charge. The case where the convenience store is selected both as the place of reception of the merchandise and as the way of paying the charge will be described below.--

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A method of ordering and delivering merchandise in an electronic mall, comprising the steps of:
 - opening an electronic mall composed of virtual stores on a network;
 - accepting access from a user terminal available to any user to said electronic mall through a communication path;
 - providing merchandise information to said user terminal;
 - accepting an order of merchandise from the user on the basis of said merchandise information;
 - providing delivery destination selection information concerning delivery of said ordered merchandise to said user terminal;
 - accepting a delivery destination requested from said user terminal on the basis of said delivery destination selection information;
 - when the accepted delivery destination is a merchandise relay station as a place of user's merchandise reception, providing map information [concerning said delivery destination] indicating candidates of available merchandise relay station as the accepted delivery destination to said user terminal;
 - accepting a specific delivery destination determined from said user terminal based on the map information; and
 - providing information of said specific delivery designation and said

merchandise order information to said determined delivery destination.

2. (Amended) A method of ordering and delivering merchandise in an electronic mall, comprising the steps of:

opening an electronic mall composed of virtual stores on a network;

accepting access from a user terminal available to any user to said electronic mall through a public telephone line;

providing merchandise information to said user terminal;

accepting an order of merchandise from the user on the basis of said merchandise information;

providing selection information to said user terminal, said selection information containing a choice of a dealer of a neighborhood capable of mediating delivery, as a delivery designation of said ordered merchandise on the basis of a pre-set address of said user terminal, [as a delivery designation of said ordered merchandise] said dealer representing a place of user's merchandise reception;

accepting a delivery destination [address requested] specified from said user terminal on the basis of said delivery destination selection information [, and];

when said dealer of the neighborhood capable of mediating delivery as the place of user's merchandise reception is selected as said delivery designation, selecting relevant map information [of said data] on the basis of the address of said user terminal from systematized data of a plurality of maps provided so as to select said dealer capable of mediating delivery, as the place of user's merchandise reception, and providing said selected map information to said user terminal;

accepting a specific dealer as a delivery designation determined from said

user terminal on the basis of said provided map information; and

providing information of said delivery destination and information of said merchandise order to said [delivery destination] specific dealer.

3. (Amended) A method of ordering and delivering merchandise in an electronic mall by providing said electronic mall of virtual stores on a network, accepting order of merchandise through a public telephone line from a user terminal available to any user and performing a service of delivering said merchandise to said user, said method comprising the steps of:

providing merchandise information to said user terminal;

accepting an order of merchandise on the basis of said merchandise information ;

providing selection information to said user terminal, said selection information containing a choice of a dealer of a neighborhood capable of mediating delivery, as a delivery designation of said ordered merchandise, on the basis of a pre-set address of said user terminal, [as a delivery designation of said ordered merchandise] said dealer representing a place of user's merchandise reception;

accepting a delivery destination [address requested] specified from said user terminal on the basis of said delivery destination selection information[, and,];

when said dealer of the neighborhood capable of mediating delivery as the place of user's merchandise reception is selected as said delivery designation, selecting relevant map information [of said data] on the basis of the address of said user terminal from systematized data of a plurality of maps provided so as to select said dealer capable of mediating delivery, as the place of user's merchandise

reception and providing said selected map information to said user terminal;

accepting a specific dealer as a delivery destination determined from said user terminal on the basis of said provided map information;

providing related information containing advertising information of said specific dealer to said user terminal in response to the accepting of said specific dealer; and

providing information of said delivery destination and information of said merchandise order to said [delivery destination] specific dealer.

4. (Amended) A system of ordering and delivering merchandise in an electronic mall by accepting an order of merchandise from any customer through a home page or a virtual store concerning sales of merchandise and constructed on a network by a sales merchant and through said network and delivering said ordered merchandise to a delivery destination designated by said customer, said system comprising:

a map information unit for holding systematized data of a plurality of maps as map information;

a dealer information unit for storing dealer information concerning dealers capable of dealing or mediating merchandise and addresses of said dealers;

a map information display unit by which said plurality of maps can be retrieved on the basis of address information;

means for searching for a map having a dealer of a neighborhood of the delivery destination in a region of said map on the basis of said address information of said customer when [a] said dealer is to be selected as a delivery destination of

merchandise by said customer upon accepting of the customer's order; and

means for determining a specific dealer selected by said customer as a delivery destination of said merchandise based on the searched map, through display on said home page or said virtual store, said specific dealer representing a place of customer's merchandise reception.

5. (Amended) A system of ordering and delivering merchandise in an electronic mall by accepting an order of merchandise from any customer through a home page or a virtual store concerning sales of merchandise and constructed on a network by a sales merchant and through said network and delivering said ordered merchandise to a delivery destination designated by said customer, said system comprising:

a map information unit for holding systematized digital or image data of a plurality of maps;

a dealer information unit for storing dealer information concerning dealers capable of dealing or mediating merchandise and addresses of said dealers;

a map information display unit by which said plurality of maps can be retrieved;

means for searching for a map having a dealer of a neighborhood of the delivery destination in a region of said map on the basis of address information input through said terminal by said customer when said [specific] dealer is to be selected as a delivery destination by said customer upon accepting of an order of merchandise from said customer; and

means for determining as a delivery destination of said merchandise, a

specific dealer selected by said customer based on said searched map displayed together with said dealer information on said home page or said virtual store, said specific dealer representing a place of customer's merchandise reception.

6. (Amended) A system of ordering and delivering merchandise in an electronic mall by accepting an order of merchandise from any customer through a home page or a virtual store concerning sales of merchandise and constructed on a network by a sales merchant and through said network and delivering said ordered merchandise to a delivery destination designated by said customer, said system comprising:

a map information unit for holding systematized digital or image data of a plurality of maps;

a dealer information unit for storing dealer information concerning dealers capable of dealing or mediating merchandise and addresses of said dealers;

a map information display unit by which said plurality of maps can be retrieved;

means for searching for a map having a dealer of a neighborhood of the delivery destination in a region of said map on the basis of address information input through said terminal by said customer when said [specific] dealer is to be selected as a delivery destination by said customer when upon accepting of an order of merchandise from said customer;

means for determining as a delivery destination of said merchandise, a specific dealer selected by said customer based on said searched map displayed together with said dealer information on said home page or said virtual store, said

specific dealer representing a place of customer's merchandise reception; and

means for entering said dealer information together with advertising information concerning an outline of said dealer, merchandise and service through a dealer's computer system or terminal connected to said network.

7. (Amended) A system of ordering and delivering merchandise in an electronic mall by accepting an order of merchandise from any customer through a home page or a virtual store concerning sales of merchandise and constructed on a network by a sales merchant and through said network and delivering said ordered merchandise to a delivery destination designated by said customer, said system comprising:

a map information unit for holding systematized digital or image data of a plurality of maps;

a dealer information unit for storing dealer information concerning dealers capable of dealing or mediating merchandise and addresses of said dealers;

a map information display unit by which said plurality of maps can be retrieved;

means for searching for a map having a dealer of a neighborhood of the delivery destination in a region of said map on the basis of address information input through said terminal by said customer when said [specific] dealer is to be selected as a delivery destination by said customer upon accepting of an order of merchandise from said customer;

means for determining as a delivery destination of said merchandise, a specific dealer selected by said customer based on said searched map displayed

together with said dealer information on said home page or said virtual store, said specific dealer representing a place of customer's merchandise reception; and

means for displaying a convenience store in a designated region so as to be superposed on a map of said designated region on the basis of said dealer information containing data of positional information, store name, etc. corresponding to coordinates on each map in said map information as address data of said convenience store capable of dealing or mediating merchandise.

8. (Amended) A method of ordering and delivering merchandise in an electronic mall by accepting an order of merchandise from any customer through a home page or a virtual store concerning sales of merchandise and constructed on a network by a sales merchant and through said network and delivering said ordered merchandise to a delivery destination designated by said customer, said method comprising the steps of:

when a specific dealer is to be selected as a delivery destination of merchandise by said customer upon accepting of an order of merchandise from said customer through said terminal, searching for a map having said specific dealer of a neighborhood of the delivery destination in the region of said map on the basis of address information input by said customer-displaying said map on said home page or said virtual store; and

determining said specific dealer selected by said customer as a delivery destination of said merchandise, said specific dealer representing a place of customer's merchandise reception.

9. (Amended) A method of ordering and delivering merchandise in an electronic mall by accepting an order of merchandise from any customer through a home page or a virtual store concerning sales of merchandise and constructed on a network by a sales merchant and through said network and delivering said ordered merchandise to a delivery destination designated by said customer, said method comprising the steps of:

when a dealer is to be selected as a delivery destination of merchandise by said customer when upon accepting of an order of merchandise from said customer through said terminal, searching for a map having said dealer of a neighborhood of the delivery destination in a region of said map on the basis of address information input by said customer;

displaying said searched map on said home page or said virtual store;

determining a specific dealer selected by said customer as a delivery destination of said merchandise, based on the displayed map, said specific dealer representing a place of customer's merchandise reception;

determining and preparing a delivery schedule on the basis of a condition of a contract with reference to delivery schedule models predetermined in consideration of delivery schedules determined on the basis of past data when said contract is made with respect to said merchandise; and

performing schedule management periodically by using electronic mail while monitoring whether inspection information exists in a specified period when said dealer exists.